ANNUAL REPORT 1982 - 83

Alberta Health and Social Services

Disciplines Committee

Alberta

1982-83 ANNUAL REPORT

OF

THE ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

Alberta Health and Social Services
Disciplines Committee
c/o Planning Secretariat
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March 1983

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. History of the Committee

The history of attempts to establish a formal coordinating mechanism between the various departments of the provincial government involved in manpower planning for health and social service personnel goes back to August 1973. At that time, an interdepartmental committee called the Alberta Health Manpower Committee was struck. The committee consisted of senior officials from the Departments of Health and Social Development, Labour and Manpower, and Advanced Education and the Alberta Hospitals Services Commission. The Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Social Development acted as Chairman of the Alberta Health Manpower Committee.

The re-organization of government departments in 1975-76 necessitated the establishment of a new interdepartmental committee. In August 1976, the Ministers of Social Services and Community Health, Advanced Education and Manpower, and Hospitals and Medical Care established the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. The first meeting of the Committee was held on September 8, 1976.

The present report, which is the Committee's sixth Annual Report, describes the activities of the Committee from April 1, 1982 to March 31, 1983.

B. Roles of the Committee

The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee has the following two main roles:

1. To advise the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the Departments of Advanced Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, Manpower,

and Social Services and Community Health on major health and social service manpower issues; and

2. to coordinate the four Departments' manpower planning, research, and data collection activities for health and social service personnel.

The Committee's formal terms of reference appear in Appendix A on page 12.

C. Membership of the Committee

Prior to the re-organization of provincial government departments in December 1982, the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee was made up of two representatives each from the Departments of Advanced Education and Manpower, Hospitals and Medical Care, and Social Services and Community Health. After the re-organization, four departments are represented on the Committee: Advanced Education, Hospitals and Medical Care, Manpower, and Social Services and Community Health. The Committee is headed by Mr. Elvin Christenson, F.C.A., a non-government Chairman appointed by the Ministers.

The Committee has a Secretariat composed of staff members from the participating departments. The Secretariat provides research support to the Committee. Mr. Raymond Pong from the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services and Community Health serves as the Committee's Executive Secretary.

Dr. Douglas Shedden, Director of Health Promotion and Protection, Department of Social Services and Community Health, resigned from the Committee in February, 1983. He was replaced by Mr. Marcel Arcand. Mr. Richard Powell of the Department of Social Services and Community Health resigned from the Committee's Secretariat in December, 1982. A list of the current members of the Alberta Health

and Social Services Disciplines Committee and of the Secretariat appears in Appendix B on page 13.

Government officials knowledgeable in health and social service matters were often invited to attend meetings as observers in order to assist the Committee in its deliberations on various health and social service manpower issues.

D. Major Activities of the Committee

The Committee met on the average of once a month during the year. Its major activities involved the collection of manpower data on major health and social service professions and occupations in the province, the consideration of reports produced by the Committee's Secretariat on various health and social service manpower issues, and the making of recommendations to be directed to the Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the four departments. A more detailed description of these activities appears in the following sections.

II. MANPOWER DATA COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION

In order to obtain base-line information for manpower planning purposes, a number of major data collection activities are undertaken regularly by the participating departments under the auspices of the Committee. These include annual surveys of provincial employers, professional associations, registration boards, and health and social service training programs. These surveys are designed to monitor manpower supply and demand situations in the health care and social service sector and to provide up-to-date and reliable data for manpower planning purposes.

A. Survey of Professional Associations and Registration Boards

Manpower information and data were collected by the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee on the following 43 health and social service manpower groups on December 31, 1982 through a survey of professional associations and registration boards:

1. Audiologists and Speech Pathologists
2. Biomedical Engineers
3. Child Care Workers
4. Chiropractors
5. Combined Laboratory and X-Ray Technicians
6. Dental Assistants
7. Dental Hygienists
8. Dental Technicians
9. Dentists
10. Denturists
11. Dialysis Technicians
12. Dietary Technicians
13. Dietitians/Nutritionists
14. Electrocardiographic Technicians
15. Electroencephalographic Technologists
16. Emergency Medical Technicians - Paramedic

17. Health Record Administrators (Medical Record Librarians)
18. Health Record Technicians (Medical Record Technicians)
19. Hearing Aid Audiologists
20. Medical Laboratory Technologists
21. Mental Deficiency Nurses
22. Occupational Therapists
23. Ophthalmic Assistants
24. Ophthalmic Dispensers
25. Optometrists
26. Orthoptists
27. Pharmacists
28. Physicians
29. Physiological Laboratory Technologists
30. Physiotherapists
31. Podiatrists
32. Prosthetists and Orthotists
33. Psychiatric Nurses
34. Psychologists
35. Public Health Inspectors
36. Radiological Technicians
37. Recreation Therapists
38. Registered Nurses
39. Registered Nursing Assistants
40. Rehabilitation Practitioners
41. Respiratory Technologists
42. Social Workers
43. Ultra-sound Technicians

Data on dialysis technicians, mental deficiency nurses, physiological laboratory technologists, and ultra-sound technicians were collected by the Committee for the first time in 1982-83.

Because of time constraints and limitation of resources, it was not possible to collect data on all health and social service manpower groups currently practising in Alberta. However, the Committee hopes to gradually increase its data collection efforts in the

future to include all major health and social service manpower groups in the province.

B. Surveys of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel

In 1979 the Department of Social Services and Community Health began surveying employers of health and social service personnel in Alberta on a regular basis on behalf of the Committee. The surveys were designed to collect province-wide information on the current number of practising health and social service personnel in Alberta and the current vacancy and turnover situations. The main objectives of these surveys were three-fold:

1. to regularly monitor the current supply and demand situations for the major health and social service manpower groups in the province;

2. to provide employers and the provincial government with an "early warning" system for discovering manpower shortages, high turnovers of personnel and problems of geographic maldistribution; and

3. to provide information to enable Alberta to gear its health and social service manpower training programs to produce the numbers and types of personnel which employers require.

Two employer surveys were carried out in 1982-83. The Department of Hospitals and Medical Care conducted a survey on general hospitals, auxiliary hospitals, and nursing homes on March 31, 1982. Manpower information was collected on hospital and nursing home personnel.

On September 30, 1982, the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services and Community Health, with assistance from the Departments of Advanced Education and Manpower and Hospitals and Medical Care, conducted a comprehensive survey on behalf of the Committee. Over 3,400 employers of health and social service

personnel in the province were contacted. With a response rate of 99 percent, the survey obtained manpower data on 72 health and social service occupations.

C. Survey of Health and Social Service Training Programs

On behalf of the Committee, the Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education conducted an annual survey of health and social service training programs in post-secondary educational institutions in Alberta. As training programs are a major source of supply of health and social service personnel, the purpose of the survey is to obtain information on potential manpower supply. The survey was designed to obtain data on the number of applicants, first-year enrolment quotas, actual enrolments, and number of graduates produced by the training programs.

D. The Alberta Physicians Data Bank

The Department of Hospitals and Medical Care maintains a data bank on physicians currently practising in Alberta. The primary source of information for this data bank is from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta. The Alberta Physicians Data Bank provides, among other things, information on the number of physicians in Alberta by specialty area and location of practice.

E. Health and Social Service Manpower Indicators

The Committee introduced in 1982-83 the use of manpower indicators in an effort to enhance its capability to monitor health and social service manpower trends and to provide timely indications of changes in labour market forces. Health and social service manpower indicators were produced on a semi-annual basis by the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee, using administrative data and published statistics from a variety of sources.

F. Nursing Manpower Model

A computer model which can provide nursing manpower projections based on different assumptions was developed by the Nursing Manpower and Education Implementation Committee. In its recommendations to the Government, the advisory committee on nursing proposed that the Secretariat to the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee assume full responsibility for the maintenance of the Nursing Manpower Model. This recommendation was accepted. The Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Eduation maintained the model on behalf of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee.

G. Publications and Manpower Information Dissemination

The data and information collected were used by the Committee for its manpower planning and research work as well as by other government departments, non-governmental agencies, educational institutions, and professional associations. Information was disseminated mainly through publications and reports that are available to the general public. The Committee publishes three documents on a regular basis. These are the "Summary Report of the Survey of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel", Health and Social Service Manpower in Alberta, and Alberta Health and Social Service Training Program Inventory.

In March 1983, the Committee released the results of its eighth survey of employers, which was conducted on September 30, 1982. The "September 30, 1982 Survey of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel in Alberta", published by the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee, contained manpower information pertaining to the number of full-time equivalent positions in health care and social service institutions and agencies, and vacancy rates and turnover rates for 72 occupations.

In November 1982 a report entitled Health and Social Service Manpower in Alberta, 1981 was published by the Planning Secretariat of the Department of Social Services and Community Health on behalf of the Committee. This report provided basic manpower information and statistical data on 35 health and social service occupational groups. The manpower information contained in this publication was obtained from the survey of employers, survey of professional associations and registration boards, survey of health and social service training programs, and the Alberta Physicians Data Bank.

In March 1983, the Health and Social Service Programs Branch of the Department of Advanced Education published a report entitled Alberta Health and Social Service Training Program Inventory, 1981-82 on behalf of the Committee. This report contained information on where training programs were located in the province, length of training programs, number of applicants, first-year enrolment quotas, number of students enrolled, and number of graduates.

III. HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICE MANPOWER PLANNING

Although many health and social service manpower concerns were brought to the attention of the Committee in 1982-83, the Committee focussed its research and planning efforts on the following issues:

1. Mental health nursing;
2. Nursing education;
3. Registered nursing assistants;
4. Manpower implications of Alberta's hospital construction program; and
5. Immigration of health and social service personnel to Alberta.

From time to time, special work requests were referred to the Committee by the Deputy Ministers and other senior officials of the participating departments. These requests dealt with important health and social service manpower concerns and were deemed relevant to the work of the Committee. One of the major assignments in 1982-83 was a request to review the "Western Canada Health Manpower Training Study", a consultant's study commissioned by the Premiers of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan in 1980. The objectives of the study were to examine the existing and future training requirements for 29 health occupations in Western Canada and to make recommendations on the rationalization of the location and funding of training programs and facilities. As the "Western Canada Health Manpower Training Study" was a major attempt in regional and provincial health manpower planning, the Committee devoted considerable attention to this study.

The Committee also actively supported the work of other advisory committees and task forces, particularly in their deliberations on manpower implications of service delivery, professional legislation, and training. Manpower information and related inputs were provided by the Committee to advisory bodies such as the Health Occupations Board, the Alberta Task Force on Services to Disabled Persons, the Nursing Home Review Panel, and the Nursing Manpower and Education Implementation Committee.

IV. INTERPROVINCIAL LIAISON

In order to keep abreast of developments and manpower planning activities in other parts of the country, three members of the Committee's Secretariat (Mrs. Vivien Lai, Mr. William Novasky, and Mr. Raymond Pong) maintain close contacts with their counterparts in other provinces through their membership on two interprovincial committees, the Federal-Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Manpower and the Western Canada Post-Secondary Health Manpower Requirements Subcommittee. The former reports to the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health; the latter is a subcommittee to the Western Canada Post-Secondary Coordinating Committee.

Both Committees meet semi-annually. The major topics dealt with by these two Committees in 1982-83 were:

1. Physician manpower;
2. Funding of physicians' residency training;
3. Training of medical officers of health;
4. Dental amd dental auxiliary manpower;
5. Mental health and psychiatric nursing manpower;
6. Nursing personnel and nursing training;
7. Podiatric manpower;
8. Training of native health care and social service workers;
9. Pharmacy manpower;
10. Personnel in geriatrics and gerontology;
11. Impact of medical technology on health personnel;
12. Speech therapy and audiology personnel;
13. Interpreter training for the hearing impaired;
14. Rehabilitation therapy manpower;
15. Interprovincial training agreements; and
16. Distance education for health and social service personnel.

The Secretariat to the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee assisted the Federal-Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Manpower in the production of a number of national reports dealing with health and social service manpower issues.

APPENDIX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

1. In conjunction with appropriate agencies, develop on an ongoing basis inventories on:
    i. Health and Social Services Disciplines Training Programs.
    ii. Health and Social Services Disciplines Supply and Distribution.
2. Review pertinent studies, data and executive decisions from other jurisdictions on the training and supply of health and social service manpower.
3. Review short- and long-range plans from appropriate agencies for:
    i. Health and Social Services Disciplines Training Programs.
    ii. Health and Social Services Disciplines Supply and Distribution.
4. Review alternative requirements to meet the needs for the development of health and social services in the future.
5. Define areas of particular concern in the training and/or supply and/or distribution of health and social services personnel and recommend ways of resolving these concerns.
6. Advise from time to time on request the need for in-depth studies in particular areas of manpower training and supply.
7. Undertake such other related activities as may be required.
8. Submit an annual report on the activities of the Committee.

APPENDIX B

MEMBERSHIP OF THE ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE (as of March 31, 1983)

Members

Mr. Elvin Christenson, F.C.A. Chairman, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

Mr. Marcel Arcand, Senior Director, Professional Services, Social Services Division, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Mr. Gordon Armstrong, Executive Secretary, Alberta Manpower Committee, Alberta Manpower

Dr. D.E. Berghofer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Program Services Division, Alberta Advanced Education

Dr. A.V. Follett, Senior Medical Consultant, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Mr. D.J. Junk, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Development Division, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Dr. J.D. Taylor, Acting Director, Division Support Branch, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Secretariat

Mr. Raymond W. Pong, Executive Secretary, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee; Director of Manpower Planning, Planning Secretariat, Alberta Social Services and Community Health

Mr. Edward Bruce, Senior Program Consultant, Health and Social Service Programs Branch, Alberta Advanced Education

Ms. Janet Davidson, Manpower Planning Consultant, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Mrs. Vivien Lai, Director, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Hospitals and Medical Care

Mr. William E. Novasky, Director, Health and Social Service Programs Branch, Alberta Advanced Education

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